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Agenda item 67

QUESTION OF ANTARCTICA

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Peter GOOSEN (South Africa)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Question of Antarctica" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-ninth session in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/80 of 16 December 1993.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 23 September 1994, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 13 October, the First Committee decided that the general debate, consideration of and action on the draft resolution on item 67 should take place from 21 to 23 November. The deliberations on, consideration of and action on the draft resolution on this item took place at the 26th meeting, on 22 November.

4. In connection with item 67, the First Committee had before it the following document: report of the Secretary-General on the Question of Antarctica (A/49/370).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.1/49/L.53

5. On 21 November, the Chairman of the First Committee submitted a draft resolution entitled "Question of Antarctica" (A/C.1/49/L.53). The draft resolution was introduced by the Chairman at the 26th meeting, on 22 November.

6. At its 26th meeting, on 22 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/49/L.53 without a vote (see para. 7).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

7. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Question of Antarctica

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Antarctica",

Taking into account the debates on this item held since its thirty-eighth session,

Reaffirming the interest of the international community in information on Antarctica,

Welcoming the provision by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to the Secretary-General of the final report of the Eighteenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, 1/ which took place at Kyoto, Japan, from 11 to 22 April 1994,

Conscious of the particular significance of Antarctica to the international community, including for international peace and security, the global and regional environment, its effects on global and regional climate conditions, and scientific research,

Reaffirming that the management and use of Antarctica should be conducted in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and of promoting international cooperation for the benefit of mankind as a whole,

Recognizing that the Antarctic Treaty, which provides, inter alia, for the demilitarization of the continent, the prohibition of nuclear explosions and the disposal of nuclear wastes, the freedom of scientific research and the free exchange of scientific information, is in furtherance of the purposes and principles of the Charter,

Conscious of the interrelationship between Antarctica and the physical, chemical and biological processes that regulate the total Earth system,

Taking into account the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, adopted by the Antarctic Treaty Parties at Madrid on 4 October 1991,

Welcoming the designation, in the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, of Antarctica as a natural reserve devoted to peace and science and the procedures contained in the Protocol regarding the protection of

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1/ See A/49/370.

the Antarctic environment and dependent and associated ecosystems in the planning and conduct of all activities in Antarctica,

Commending the prohibition on mineral resource activities contained in the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty,

Welcoming the recognition by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992, of the value of Antarctica as an area for the conduct of scientific research, in particular research essential to understanding the global environment, 2/

Welcoming also the continuing cooperation among countries undertaking scientific research activities in Antarctica, which may help to minimize human impacts on the Antarctic environment,

Welcoming further the increasing awareness of an interest in Antarctica shown by the international community, and convinced of the advantages to the whole of mankind of a better knowledge of Antarctica,

Affirming its conviction that, in the interest of all mankind, Antarctica should continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and that it should not become the scene or object of international discord,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on Antarctica and on the report of the Eighteenth Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, 1/ which took place at Kyoto, Japan, from 11 to 22 April 1994;

2. Welcomes the practice whereby the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties regularly provide the Secretary-General with information on their consultative meetings and on their activities in Antarctica, encourages the Parties to continue to provide to the Secretary-General and other interested States information on developments in relation to Antarctica, and requests the Secretary-General to submit that information in a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session;

3. Notes the role accorded by the Secretary-General to the United Nations Environment Programme in relation to Antarctic matters;

4. Urges the Antarctic Treaty Parties to extend invitations to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to attend future consultative meetings in order to assist them in the substantive work;

5. Welcomes the statement under chapter 17 of Agenda 21, 2/ adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, that States carrying out research activities in Antarctica should, as provided for in article III of the Antarctic Treaty, continue to:

2/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II, chap. 17, para. 17.104.

(a) Ensure that data and information resulting from such research are freely available to the international community;

(b) Enhance access of the international scientific community and specialized agencies of the United Nations to such data and information, including the encouragement of periodic seminars and symposia;

6. Urges the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to take into account in their deliberations the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly as noted in paragraph 5 above;

7. Requests the Antarctic Treaty Parties to continue to make available information on Antarctica as a means of promoting further public awareness of the importance of Antarctica to the global and regional environment;

8. Urges the Antarctic Treaty Parties to consider becoming parties as soon as possible to the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, and so bring the Protocol into force, in order to ensure the implementation of strengthened measures for the protection of the Antarctic environment and dependent and associated ecosystems;

9. Urges countries whose nationals undertake activities in Antarctica to ensure that all such activities are carried out in a manner consistent with the principles of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty;

10. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-first session the item entitled "Question of Antarctica".